

Maertens  
Appl. No. 09/899,302  
February 23, 2004

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-23 (Canceled).

24. (Previously Presented) An isolated polynucleic acid specifically hybridizing with a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 55 to SEQ ID NO: 81, under conditions allowing discrimination of up to 1 nucleotide mismatch, or the complement thereof.

25. (Previously Presented) An isolated HCV virus characterized by any of the 5' UTR nucleotide sequences selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 55 to 81.

Claims 26-27. (Canceled)